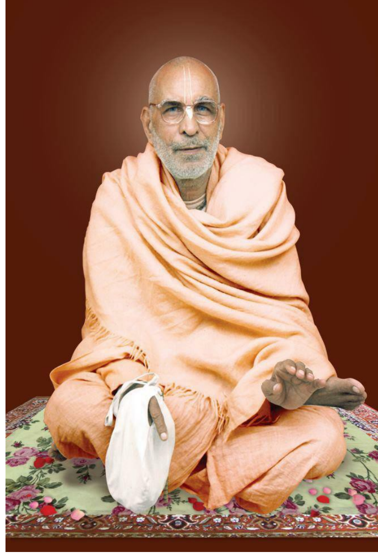
Brahma, Paramātmā and Bhagavān

Know the tattva



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

|| *1.2.11* ||

vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam |
brahmeti paramātmeti bhagavān iti śabdyate ||

madhvaḥ : *advayam asamādhikam | tathā ca bhāllaveya śrutiḥ—sa puruṣaḥ so'dvayaḥ iti | na hy enam abhi kaścana hy enam atikaścana iti ca | so'dvayaḥ puruṣas tasmān na samo nādhiko ya ata iti mahā-saṁhitāyām | tattva-śabdārthas tatraivoktaḥ |*

atītānāgate kāle yat tādṛśam udīryate |
kutaścid anyathāneyāt tat tattvaṁ tattvato viduḥ || iti ||11||

śrīdharaḥ : *nanu ca tattva-jijñāsā nāma dharma-jijñāsaiva dharma eva hi tattvam iti kecit ? tatrāha—**tattva-vidas** tu **tad** eva **tattvaṁ vadanti** | kiṁ tat ? **yaj jñānaṁ** nāma | **advayam** iti kṣaṇika-vijñāna-pakṣaṁ vyāvartayati | nanu tattva-vido'pi vigīta-vacanā eva ? maivam | tasyaiva tattvasya nāmāntarair abhidhānād ity arthaḥ | aupaniṣadair **brahmeti**, hairaṇyagarbhaiḥ **paramātmeti**, sātvatair **bhagavān ity** abhidhīyate ||11||*

krama-sandarbhaḥ : *vadantīti tair vyākhyātam | tatra vigīta-vacanāḥ ity atra parasparam iti śeṣaḥ | tattvasaya nāmāntarair abhidhānāt iti dharmiṇi sarveṣām abhramāt, dharma eva tu bhramād iti |*

*yad vā, kiṁ tattvam ? ity apekṣāyām āha—vadantīti | **jñānaṁ** cid-eka-rūpam | **advayatvaṁ** cāsya svayaṁ-siddha-tādṛśātādṛśa-tattvāntarābhāvāt sva-śakty-eka-sahāyatvāt | paramāśrayaṁ taṁ vinā tāsām asiddhatvāc ca | **tattvam** iti parama-puruṣārthatā-dyotanayā parama-sukha-rūpatvaṁ tasya bodhyate | ata eva tasya nityatvaṁ ca darśitam |*

atra śrīmad-bhāgavatākhya eva śāstre kvacid anyatrāpi tad ekaṁ tattvaṁ tridhā ***śabdyate*** *| kvacid* ***brahmeti****, kvacit* ***paramātmeti****, kvacid* ***bhagavān iti*** *ca | kintv atra śrīmad-vyāsa-samādhi-labdhād bhedāj jīva iti ca śabdyate iti noktam iti jñeyam |*

[1]*atra śakti-varga-lakṣaṇa-tad-dharmātiriktaṁ kevalaṁ jñānaṁ brahmeti śabdyate, antaryāmitva-maya-māyā-śakti-pracura-cic-chakty-aṁśa-viśiṣṭaṁ paramātmeti | paripūrṇa-sarva-śakti-viśiṣṭaṁ bhagavān iti |*[2] *evam evoktaṁ śrī-jaḍa-bharatena—*

> *jñānaṁ viśuddhaṁ paramārtham ekam*
> *anantaraṁ tv abahir brahma satyam |*
> *pratyak praśāntaṁ bhagavac-chabda-saṁjñaṁ*
> *yad vāsudevaṁ kavayo vadanti || [bhā.pu. 5.12.11] iti |*

tasmai namo bhagavate brahmaṇe paramātmane [bhā.pu. 10.28.6] ity atra varuṇa-kṛta-śrī-kṛṣṇa-stutau ṭīkā ca—paramātmane sarva-jīva-niyantre ity eṣā | dhruvaṁ prati śrī-manunā—

> *tvaṁ pratyag-ātmani tadā bhagavaty ananta |*
> *ānanda-mātra upapanna-samasta-śaktau || [bhā.pu. 4.11.30]*
> *iti |*

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1 From here to next note in *Bhakti*-sandarbha 7.

2 atha śrīmad-bhāgavatākhya eva śāstre kvacid anayatrāpi tad ekaṁ *tattva*ṁ tridhā śabdyate | kvacid brahmeti kvacit paramātmeti kvacid bhagavān iti ca | kintv atra śrīmad-vyāsa-samādhi-labdhād bhedāj *jīva* iti ca śabdyate iti svayam eva vyākhyāto bhavatīti prathamatas tāv eva prastūyate | mūle tu kramād vaiśiṣṭya-dyotanāya tathā vinyāsaḥ | ayam arthaḥ—tad ekam evākhaṇḍ*ānanda-svarūpa*ṁ *tattva*ṁ thutkṛta-pārameṣṭhyādik*ānanda*-samudayānāṁ paramahaṁsānāṁ sādhana-vaśāt tādātmyam āpanne satyām api tadīya-*svarūpa-śakti*-vaicitryāṁ tad-grahaṇāsāmarthye cetasi yathā sāmānyato lakṣitaṁ tathaiva sphurad vā tadvad evāvivikta-*śakti-śakti*mattābhedatayā pratipādyamānaṁ vā brahmeti śabdyate |

atha tad ekaṁ *tattva*ṁ *svarūpa*-bhūtayaiva śaktyā kam api viśeṣaṁ dhartuṁ parāsām api śaktīnāṁ mūlāśraya-rūpaṁ tad-anubhāv*ānanda*-sandohāntar-bhāvita-tādṛśa-brahmānandānāṁ bhāgavata-paramahaṁsānāṁ tathānubhavaika-sādhakatama-tadīya-svarūp*ānanda-śakti*-viśeṣātmaka-*bhakti*-bhāviteṣv antar-bahir apīndriyeṣu parisphurad vā tadvad eva vivikta-tādṛśa-*śakti-śakti*mattābhedena pratipādyamānaṁ vā bhagavān iti śabdyate | (bhagavat-sandarbha 1)

atrānanda-mātraṁ viśeṣyam, samastāḥ śaktayo viśeṣaṇāni, viśiṣṭo bhagavān ity āyātam | bhagavac-chabdārthaḥ śrī-viṣṇu-purāṇe proktaḥ—

jñāna-śakti-balaiśvarya-vīrya-tejāṁsy aśeṣataḥ |
bhagavac-chabda-vācyāni vinā heyair guṇādibhiḥ ||
[vi.pu. 6.5.79] iti ||11||

[bhagavat-sandarbha 1]

***viśvanāthaḥ** : tattvam eva kiṁ ? tatrāha—vadantīti | **yad advayaṁ jñānaṁ tat tattvam** | jñānam eva kiṁ ? tatrāha—**brahmeti śabdyate** brahmeti padena yad ucyate jñānibhis taj jñānam | tan-mate jñānaṁ nirākāraṁ jñātṛ-jñeyādi-vibhāga-śūnyaṁ cit-sāmānyaṁ cid-viśeṣāṇāṁ bhagavad-dhāmādīnāṁ tad-ananyatva-mananāt | jīva-māyāyās tac-chaktitvena tad-aikyād idaṁ-kārāspadasya kāryasya viśvasya kāraṇa-mātrātmakatvād advaitam |*

*tathā **paramātmeti** yogibhir yad ucyate taj jñānam | etan-mate paramātmanaś cid-eka-rūpatvāj jñāna-mātratvaṁ jñāna-mātratve'pi sākṣitvāder jñāna-viśeṣasyāśrayatvam api | dyumaṇi-dīpāder jyotī-rūpatve'pi jyotiṣmattvam iva nānupapannaṁ—kecit sva-dehāntar-hṛdayāvakāśe; prādeśa-mātraṁ puruṣaṁ vasantaṁ [bhā.pu. 2.2.8] sākāratvaṁ ca | māyāyāḥ śaktitvān māyikānāṁ ca tad-anyatvāj jīvasya tad-vibhinnāṁśatvāt tato dvitīyatvābhāvād advayatvam |*

*tathā **bhagavān iti** bhaktair yad ucyate taj jñānam | etan-mate pūrvavaj jñāna-mātratve'pi bhaga-śabda-vācya-ṣaḍ-aiśvaryasyāpi aprākṛtatvena cin-mātratvāt tad-rūpatvam, yad uktaṁ viṣṇu-purāṇe—*

aiśvaryasya samagrasya vīryasya yaśasaḥ śriyaḥ |

jñāna-vairāgyayoś caiva ṣaṇṇāṁ bhaga itīṅganā || [vi.pu. 6.5.74]
jñāna-śakti-balaiśvarya-vīrya-tejāṁsy aśeṣataḥ |
bhagavac-chabda-vācyāni vinā heyair guṇādibhiḥ || [vi.pu. 6.5.79] iti |

tathaiva dvibhujatva-caturbhujatvādi-vividha-cid-ghanākārair bahir-antarvartitve'pi, na cyavante hi mad-bhaktā mahatyāṁ pralayāpadi iti skāndādi-vākyaiḥ sadaiva sevya-sevaka-sevādi-vibhāge'pi advayatvaṁ pūrvavat-tac-chaktīnāṁ cid-ādīnāṁ tad-vilāsānāṁ ca vaikuṇṭhādīnāṁ tad-abhinnatva-mananāt tato bhinnatva-bhāvanaivādvaya-padena vyāvṛttā |

evaṁ ca bhagavataḥ sāmānya-svarūpa-mātrasyopādeyatva-jñāniny adhikāriṇi brahmeti | antaryāmitvādi-dvitva-dharmavattvasyopādāne yoginy adhikāriṇi paramātmeti | acintyānanta-cid-ānanda-maya-svarūpa-rūpa-guṇa-līlādy-aneka-dharmavattvasya grahaṇa-yogyatāyāṁ bhakte'dhikāriṇi bhagavān iti | sa evaiko bhāti |

kiṁ ca—yan-mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanaṁ [bhā.pu. 10.14.31] iti | kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya haraye paramātmane [bhā.pu. 10.73.36] iti, madīyaṁ mahimānaṁ ca paraṁ brahmeti śabditaṁ [bhā.pu. 8.24.23] iti, brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāhaṁ [gītā 14.27] iti, viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam ekāṁśena sthito jagat [gītā 10.42] ity-ādi-vacanebhyaḥ, tathā bhagavad-upāsakānāṁ ca prema-prāpter api darśanāt | brahma-paramātmopāsakānāṁ ca prema-prāpty-adarśanād bhagavata eva brahmatva-paramātmatve ity ato bhagavattvam eva mūlam iti draṣṭavyam | tatra brahmopāsakebhyo jñānibhyaḥ sakāśāt paramātmopāsako yogī śreṣṭhaḥ | tebhyo yogibhyo'pi bhagavad-upāsakaḥ śreṣṭha iti tāratamyaṁ gītāsu dṛṣṭam, yathā—

tapasvibhyo'dhiko yogī jñānibhyo'pi mato'dhikaḥ |
karmibhyaś cādhiko yogī tasmād yogī bhavārjuna ||

yoginām api sarveṣāṁ mad-gatenāntarātmanā |
śraddhāvān bhajate yo māṁ sa me yuktatamo mataḥ || [gītā 6.46-47]

yoginām iti pañcamy-arthe ṣaṣṭhī śrī-rāmānujācāya-caraṇair vyākhyāteti ||11||

From the life-history of Śrīla Bhakti-prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Three aspects of the Absolute Truth

Śrī Vinoda-bihārī explained that Śrī Caturmukha Brahmā, Nārada, Śāṇḍilya, Parāśara, Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa and other great sages are *tattva-darśī*; they have seen the Absolute Truth. They have explained that there is only one *tattva*, or truth, and that is ***advaya-jñāna para-tattva*****,** the non-dual Absolute Truth. Although it is non-dual, it is realized in three apparently different aspects. Dry *jñānis* (empiric philosophers) use the process of *nirviśeṣa-jñāna*, or impersonal knowledge, to understand the Absolute Truth as nirviśeṣa Brahman**,** the impersonal, featureless Absolute. *Yogī*s realize it as **Paramātmā** (the Supersoul within the heart), and *śuddha-bhaktas* (pure devotees) realize that same *para-tattva* as Vrajendra-nandana **Bhagavān** by their practice of *bhakti-yoga*. So the non-dual Absolute is realized first as Brahman, secondly as Paramātmā and thirdly as Bhagavān.

He continued that the meaning of *advaya-jñāna*, or non-dual reality, is that this Absolute Truth possess acintya-*śakti*, an inconceivable potency by which the impossible is made possible (*aghaṭana-ghaṭana paṭīyasī*). The *parā*-*śakti* (supreme, transcendental potency) of the *parama-tattva* is manifest in three aspects. The first of these is *cit-śakti* (the spiritual potency) which, by the desire of *para-tattva* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, manifests Vaikuṇṭha, Goloka Vṛndāvana, the other *dhāmas* and everything within them. The second is *jīva*-*śakti* (marginal potency) which manifests innumerable *jīvas*. The third aspect, *māyā śakti* (material, external potency), manifests millions upon millions of material universes. The *jīva*, being manifested by *jīva śakti*, has minute consciousness and can be covered by *māyā*. There is an eternal relationship between on the one hand *śaktimān* (the possessor of the potencies) and on the other hand *śakti* (the potency) and the transformations of the potency, namely the *jīvas* and the material world. This relationship is *acintya-*

bhedābheda. That is to say, *śakti*, the *jīvas* and matter are simultaneously and inconceivably one with and different from the Supreme Absolute Truth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Without Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the Absolute Truth and the source of all energies, neither the *jīva* nor the creation can exist. Thus, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called *advaya-jñāna para-tattva*, the Absolute Truth without duality.

This Absolute Truth is not nirākara (without form), *niḥśaktik* (without power), nirguṇa (without attributes and qualities), and so on. *Bhakta*s anoint their eyes with the salve of *prema* (pure love) and take darśana of *advaya-jñāna para-tattva* in the form of Vrajendra-nandana. The *nirviśeṣa, nirguṇa, nirākara* Brahman which the impersonal *jñānis* perceive is only the bodily luster of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa. According to *Bhagavad-gītā*, the impersonal, undifferentiated aspect of the Absolute (which is the *brahma-tattva* of the impersonalists) is not *para-tattva* because it is neither supreme nor independent. It is dependent on Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham amṛtasyāvyayasya ca
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikāntiksya ca

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 14.27)

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: "In My form as *nirguṇa-saviśeṣa-tattva*, I have no material characteristics, but I am full of spiritual attributes, and I am indeed the shelter of Brahman, which is the ultimate goal of the *jñānis*. My *svarūpa* in the form of *nirguṇa-saviśeṣa-tattva* is the support of immortality, imperishability, eternality, *prema* (that love of God which is the *nitya-dharma*, or eternal religion of the *jīvas*) and *vraja-rasa*, the form of complete happiness."

Śrī Vinoda-bihārī elaborated with further scriptural references:

yasya prabhā prabhavato jagadaṇḍa koṭi
koṭīṣv aśeṣa vasudhādi vibhūti bhinnam
tad brahma niśkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtaṁ
govindam adi puruṣaṁ tamahaṁ bhajāmi

(*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.40)

"I worship the original person, Govinda, whose effulgence is the source of the *nirviśeṣa* Brahman which is mentioned in the Upaniṣads, which is differentiated from the infinity of glories of the mundane universe and which appears as the indivisible, infinite, limitless truth. Millions and millions of universes emanate from this Brahman effulgence."

It is important to note that the word Brahman can only be modified with adjectives such as *parama* when Brahman refers to Svayaṁ Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana (as in scriptural references to Parama-brahman). Therefore, Parama-brahman Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is superior to Brahman. Accordingly, the *advaya-jñāna para-tattva*4 is Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is sarva-*śaktimān* (the possessor of all potencies) and *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti* (the shelter of all transcendental mellows) together with all His associates, *jīvas* and jagat.

The *śakti* of Bhagavān is described in the *Vedas* and its supplementary literature:

parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
svābhāvikī jñāna bala kriyā ca
(*Śvetāṣvatara Upaniṣad* 6.8)

"The *parā-śakti* is perceivable in different forms."

viṣṇu śaktiḥ parā proktā kṣetrajñākhyā tathā parā
avidyā karmasaṁjñānyā tṛtīyā śaktir iṣyate
(*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 6.7.61)

"Viṣṇu *śakti* is of three kinds—*parā* (transcendental), *kṣetrajñā* (the living entity) and *avidyā* (nescience). Viṣṇu's *parā śakti* is called *cit-śakti*, *kṣetrajñā* is called *jīva-śakti*, and *avidyā* is *māyā-śakti*."

It is also confirmed in *Vedānta Sūtra, śakti-śaktimator-abhedaḥ:* "There is no difference between the potency (*śakti*) and the possessor of the potency (*śaktimān*)."

In this way, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī established before his class at Daulatpura that Vrajendra-nandana Śyamasundara is both the limit and the direct manifest form of the *advaya-jñāna para-tattva*.

On another occasion, the teacher chose the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* verse *Madhya-līlā* 20.108 for the class discussion.

jīvera svarūpa haya kṛṣṇera nitya dāsa
kṛṣṇera 'taṭasthā śakti' bhedābheda prakāśa

"The living entity's constitutional position is as eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. As a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's marginal energy he is simultaneously one with Kṛṣṇa and different from Him."

This time too, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī pointed out that the teacher's commentary was contrary to the scriptures. The teacher said that the *jīva* is actually Brahman; Brahman only appears to be the *jīva*, as a rope falsely appears to be a snake or as an oyster shell appears like ivory. He did not accept that the *jīvas* are the *śakti* of Brahman or that the *jīvas* and the material world are transformation of *śakti*.

Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī used simple examples to explain that it is the nature of the *jīva* to be an eternal servant of Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord. According to *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.7), *mamaivāṁśo jīvaloke jīvabhūtaḥ sanātana*: "The *jīva* is a transformation of the marginal potency (*taṭasthā-śakti*) of *sarva-śaktimān* Parabrahman, the Supreme Lord Who possess all potencies."

Although one cannot find perfect examples in this world to describe transcendental matters, analogies are often useful. Śrī Vinoda-bihārī used two analogies to explain the nature of the *jīva*: the relation of the sun's rays to the sun and the connection of the sparks to the blazing fire. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is like the sun, and the shimmering particles of light in the rays of the sun can be compared to the infinitesimal *jīvas*. Just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa is complete cit-*tattva*, full in all knowledge, so the *jīvas* are minute cit-*tattva*. However, although Bhagavān is the master of *māyā* and other *śakti*s, the *jīvas* are under the control of *māyā*. This is because Bhagavān is the basis of all transcendental qualities; He is the actual doer, the enjoyer, and the ego, and He possesses these qualities in full, whereas the *jīva* only possesses them to a minute degree. The natural relationship of the *jīva*—indeed his very constitution—is to be connected with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, just as the rays of the sun are connected to the sun. However,

the pure nature of the *jīva* is covered by a subtle and gross material body made of *māyā*, because he has forgotten Bhagavān. Therefore the *jīva* aspires to be the doer and enjoyer because, while recognizing his qualities, he forgets his minuteness. It is only by the causeless mercy of a pure transcendental guru or of Bhagavān Himself that the *jīva* can adopt *bhakti-yoga* and re-establish his *svarūpa*, or true spiritual form.

The other example is that of a blazing fire and its sparks. Innumerable, minute conscious *jīvas* manifest from the *taṭasthā śakti* (the marginal potency) like uncountable sparks from a blazing fire. Because the *jīvas* are minute by nature, their consciousness can be covered by *māyā-śakti*. *Jīva-śakti* is also known as *taṭasthā-śakti*. Because of their marginal nature, the *jīvas* are qualified to go either to the spiritual world (Vaikuṇṭha), or to the material world. When they gain the strength of *cit-śakti* (the spiritual potency), they can serve Bhagavān in Vaikuṇṭha. Conversely, when they are opposed to Bhagavān, they wander around the illusory material world. This is the profound purport of this verse.

Hearing Śrī Vinoda-bihārī's explanation which was based on *bhakti* everyone in his class was struck with wonder that their classmate could understand *tattva* so deeply.

Śrīla Prabhupāda *Bhaktisiddhānta* Sarasvati Thākura's Vivṛti (commentary) on first verse of Śṛī Śikṣaṣṭaka

Learned scholars of the absolute truth have described the supreme non-dual substance (*advaya-jñāna-vastu*) in three different stages. When that non-dual substance is realized exclusively by knowledge, or in others words through the function of the cit potency, it is referred to as '*Brahma*'. When realized through the combined functions of the *sat* and *cit* potencies, it is referred to as 'Paramātmā', and when realized through the functions of all potencies—*sat, cit,* and *ānanda*—that supreme truth is referred to as 'Bhagavān'.

Illuminations from *Bhagavad-gītā*

Chapter 6 *Śloka* 46

tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogī
jñānibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikaḥ
karmibhyaś cādhiko yogī
tasmād yogī bhavārjuna

yogī—the Paramātma-*yogī*; *mataḥ*—is considered; *adhikaḥ*—greater; *tapasvibhyaḥ*—than the ascetics; *adhikaḥ*—greater; *api*—even; *jñānibhyaḥ*—than the *brahma-vādīs*; ca—and; *yogī*—the *yogī*; (is) *adhikaḥ*—greater; *karmibhyaḥ*—than the fruitive workers; *tasmāt*—therefore; *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *bhava*—be; yogī—a *yogī*.
The *yogī* is considered superior to the *tapasvī* (ascetic), the jñānī and the *karmī*. Therefore, O Arjuna, be a *yogī*.

Sārārtha-Varṣiṇī

"Which is superior among *karma*, *jñāna*, and *yoga*?" In answer to this, Śrī Bhagavān says that a jñānī (one who worships *brahma*) is superior to an ascetic (*tapasvī*), or one who is devoted to performing severe austerities such as *cāndrāyaṇa-vrata*, and superior to such a jñānī is a *yogī* (worshiper of Paramātmā). "This is My opinion." If a *yogī* is superior to a *jñānī*, then what can be said about his superiority over a *karmī* (fruitive worker)?

Sārārtha-Varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti

Generally, it is thought that a karmī, jñānī, tapasvī, *yogī* and *bhakta* are all equal. In this present *śloka*, Śrī Bhagavān is giving His definite opinion that they are not equal; rather, there is a gradation. A *niṣkāma-karma-yogī* is superior to a *sakāma-karmī* (*tapasvī*) and a *jñānī* is superior again. An *aṣṭāṅga-yogī* is superior to a *jñānī*, and a *bhakti-yogī* is superior to all, as is described in the next *śloka*.

Chapter 6 *Śloka* 47

yoginām api sarveṣāṁ

mad-gatenāntarātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo māṁ
sa me yuktatamo mataḥ

api—however; sarveṣām—amongst all; *yoginām*—of the *yogī*s; śraddhāvān—one endowed with faith; mad-gatena—by attaching himself to Me; antar-ātmanā—through his mind; yaḥ—who; bhajate—worships; mām—Me; (it is) me— My; mataḥ—opinion; (that) saḥ—he; (is) *yuktatamaḥ*—most intimately connected in *yoga*.

He who constantly performs My *bhajana* with full faith, always thinking exclusively of Me within himself is, in My opinion, the topmost of all *yogī*s.

Sārārtha-Varṣiṇī

"Is there no one, then, who is superior to the *yogī*?" In response to this question Śrī Bhagavān says, "Don't say that," and He speaks this *śloka* beginning with *yoginām*. The word *yoginām* is in the sixth case, but actually it is to be taken in the fifth case. In the previous *śloka* the words *tapasvibhyo jñānibhyo 'dhikaḥ* are in the fifth case. Similarly, it should also be understood here as *yogibhyaḥ*, the *bhakta* is even superior to the *yogī*. "My *bhakta* is not superior to only one type of *yogī*, but to all types, whether they are *yogārūḍha*, situated in *samprajñāta-samādhi*, or situated in *asamprajñāta-samādhi*."

The import of the word *yoga* is that it is the means to *karma*, *jñāna*, tapa, *bhakti* and so on. "Among such *yogī*s, those who worship Me with *bhakti* are My devotees and are the best of sādhakas."

Karmīs, tapasvīs, and *jñānīs* are also accepted as *yogī*s, but an *aṣṭāṅga-yogī* is superior to them. "A *bhakti-yogī* however, who is engaged in hearing and chanting about Me, is the topmost." As it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.14.5):

muktānām api siddhānāṁ
nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ
sudurlabhaḥ praśāntātmā
koṭiṣv api mahā-mune

O mahā-muni, among millions of muktas and siddhas, a peaceful person who is devoted to Śrī Nārāyaṇa is most rare.

In the next eight chapters, *bhakti-yoga* will be delineated. This *śloka*, which is the sūtra of those chapters, is like an ornament adorning the necks of the *bhakta*s. In the First Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the crest jewel of all *śāstra*, an outline of the text has been given. In the Second, Third and Fourth Chapters, *niṣkāma-karma* is explained. In the Fifth Chapter *jñāna* has been described and the Sixth Chapter describes *yoga*. These six chapters, however, primarily describe *karma* (action).

Thus ends the *Bhāvānuvāda* of the *Sārārtha-Varṣiṇī Ṭīkā*, by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, on the Sixth Chapter of Śrīmad *Bhagavad-gītā*, which gives pleasure to the *bhakta*s and is accepted by all saintly persons.

Sārārtha-Varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti

At the end of this chapter Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has categorically stated that a *bhakti-yogī* is superior to all other *yogī*s. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura gives a special explanation of this *śloka* as follows:

"Amongst all types of *yogī*s, the practitioner of *bhakti-yoga* is superior. One who performs My *bhajana* with faith is the best of *yogī*s. Amongst righteous, regulated human beings, the niṣkāma-*karmī*, the *jñānī*, the *aṣṭāṅga-yogī* and the practitioner of *bhakti-yoga* are all *yogī*s, whereas the *sakāma-karmī* is not. In fact, *yoga* is one, not two. *Yoga* is a progressive path on which there are various steps. Taking shelter of this path, the *jīva* situates himself on the path of *brahma* realization. *Niṣkāma-karma-yoga* is the first step. When *jñāna* and *vairāgya* are added, it becomes *jñāna-yoga*, which is the second step. When *dhyāna*, in the form of meditation on Īśvara, is added to *jñāna-yoga*, it is called *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, the third step. And when *prīti*, affection for Bhagavān, is added to this third step of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, then that is *bhakti-yoga*, the fourth step. All these steps combined together constitute the one staircase called *yoga*. In order to explain this *yoga* clearly, all other partial types of *yoga* have

been delineated. One who desires eternal auspiciousness takes exclusive shelter of *yoga*. As he gradually progresses on this ladder, he first becomes steady on the step he is on, then he rises to the next step. But one who clings to a particular step, having only established himself in that type of *yoga*, is known by the name of that particular *yoga*. Therefore, one is known as a *karma-yogī*, one as a *jñāna-yogī*, one as an *aṣṭāṅga-yogī* and another as a *bhakti-yogī*.

"Therefore, O Pārtha, one whose supreme objective is only to perform *bhakti* unto Me is the topmost among all the *yogī*s. You should become that type of *yogī*, namely, you should become a *bhakti-yogī*."

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-Varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*, by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, on the Sixth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā.*

Chapter 15, *Śloka* 18

yasmāt kṣaram atīto'ham
akṣarād api cottamaḥ
ato'smi loke vede ca
prathitaḥ puruṣottamaḥ

yasmāt—because; aham—I; (am) atītaḥ—transcendental; *kṣara*m—to the fallible; ca—and; api—even; uttamaḥ—transcendental; akṣarāt—to the infallible; ataḥ—therefore; asmi—I am; prathitaḥ—renowned; ca—both; loke—in the world; (and) vede—in the Vedas; (as) puruṣa-uttamaḥ—the Supreme Person.

Since I am beyond *kṣara-tattva* (the fallible *jīva*), and even excel *akṣara-tattva* (the two fold *puruṣa*, *brahma* and *Paramātmā*), I am well known both in this world and in the Vedas as Puruṣottama, the Supreme Person.

Sārārtha-Varṣiṇī

After explaining Paramātmā, the worshipable object of the *yogī*s, Śrī Bhagavān describes *bhagavat-tattva*, the worshipable Deity of the *bhakta*s. Of the *bhagavat-tattva* forms, only His own Kṛṣṇa *svarūpa* is renowned as Puruṣottama. Śrī Bhagavān speaks

this *śloka* beginning with the word *yasmāt* to explain the term Puruṣottama and His su*prema*cy. This *svarūpa-tattva*, the reality of His form, is transcendental to the *kṣara* (fallible) *puruṣa*, the *jīvātmā*. He is also superior to *akṣara-brahma*, and to the immutable, *nirvikāra* Paramātmā. According to *Gītā* (6.47): *yoginām api sarveṣāṁ mad-gatenāntarātmanā*. "He who constantly performs My *bhajana* with full faith, always thinking exclusively of Me within himself is, in My opinion, the topmost of all *yogīs*." The advancement of the sādhaka's worship is established by the superiority and speciality of his worshipable Deity. Since Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme manifestation of Absolute Reality, one who worships Him is the topmost *yogī*. Among all supermost worshipable realities (*bhagavat-tattva*), the superiority of Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is established over Vaikuṇṭha-nātha Nārāyaṇa by the word *ca*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.28) Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī says: "Some personalities are His portions and parts of His portions, but Kṛṣṇa alone is Svayam Bhagavān." According to this statement of Sūta Gosvāmī, Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Reality.

Although the three words *brahma*, Paramātmā and Bhagavān explain the one Transcendental Reality, who is *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*, there is no difference in Their *svarūpa*, true constitutional nature. Also, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.9.35), it is said: *svarūpa-dvayābhāvāt*, "You do not have two *svarūpas*." Yet, due to the differences in *sādhana* and in the results obtained by those who worship *brahma*, Paramātmā and Bhagavān, there seems to be a difference in that one transcendental reality. *Jñāna*, *yoga* and *bhakti* are the respective means for the *jñānīs*, *yogī*s and *bhakta*s to attain their particular goals of *brahma*, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. In fact, the result of *jñāna* and *yoga* is only *mokṣa*, whereas the result of *bhakti* is to become a loving associate of Bhagavān. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.5.12), it is said: "*Brahma-jñāna* in the form of naiṣkarmya (freedom from material affinity) does not appear very beautiful or auspicious when it is bereft of *bhakti* to Bhagavān." And in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.5), it is said: "O great personality, in the past there were many *yogī*s in this world who offered all their

activities to Your lotus feet when they could not achieve You by the processes of *yoga* and so forth. Only then could they achieve *bhakti* to You, by which they realized Your *svarūpa*, and very easily attained Your supreme abode."

From these statements, it is understood that without *bhakti* one cannot attain *mokṣa* by the processes of *jñāna* and *yoga*. It is imperative for the worshipers of *brahma* and Paramātmā to perform *bhagavad-bhakti* in order for them to achieve perfection in the results of their respective practices. There is no need, however, for the worshipers of Bhagavān to worship *brahma* or Paramātmā to attain perfection in their goal. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.31), it is said: "The processes of *jñāna* and vairāgya in this world are not considered as the means to attain the highest perfection for a person who is engaged in *bhakti-yoga* to Me." Furthermore, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.32-33) states: "Whatever results one attains by the performance of such processes as *karma*, tapasyā, *jñāna* and vairāgya, My *bhakta*s can easily attain by the process of *bhakti*, be it Svarga, *mokṣa*, My Vaikuṇṭha-dhāma, or whatever. A person who takes shelter of Śrī Nārāyaṇa achieves the four goals of human life (dharma, artha, *karma* and *mokṣa*) without performing separate *sādhanas* to achieve them."

It is seen that by the worship of Bhagavān, one can achieve the results of *Svarga*, *mukti* or *prema*, but one cannot attain *prema* by the worship of *brahma* and Paramātmā. Even though *brahma* and Paramātmā do not differ from Bhagavān on the basis of *tattva*, only the su*prema*cy of Bhagavān is being glorified here.

A flame, a lamp and a big fire are all luminous objects and thus, non-different in nature, yet the large fire is the most effective in removing the miseries of those suffering from cold. And superior to the big fire is the sun. Similarly, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the topmost Absolute Reality. *Mokṣa*, in the form of *nirvāṇa*, attained by perfectly worshiping *brahma*, is granted by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to even those people who are envious of Him and who are highly sinful, such as Aghāsura, Bakāsura and Jarāsandha. Therefore, Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has appropriately commented on the statement, "I am the support of

nirviśeṣa-brahma." Śrīla Madhusūdana Sarasvatī has also established the supremacy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa through the following statements: "Sādhakas who want to begin their eternal good fortune should constantly perform the *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, whose form is described in the *śrutis* as *sac-cid-ānanda*, whose complexion is the hue of fresh rain-clouds, who is the very garland of the Vraja gopīs, who is the means for intelligent people to cross over the ocean of the material world, and whose *avatāra*s perform līlās to remove the burden of the earth. I do not know any other reality superior to lotus-eyed Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who has a face like a full moon, who is adorned with a flute in His hands, who wears yellow garments, and whose lips are reddish like the bimba fruit. Various *śāstras* give evidence of the wonderful glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Those who cannot tolerate this are fools and destined for hell." By these statements, Śrīla Madhusūdana Sarasvatī has established the excellence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, it is improper to voice one's disagreement with this explanation of these three *Gītā śloka*s beginning from *dvāv imu* (15.16).

Sārārtha-Varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti

This subject has been described more clearly in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.11):

vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ
yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmeti
bhagavān iti śabdyate

Those who are *tattva-vit* call the Absolute Reality *advaya-jñāna*, non-dual knowledge. Some know that very *advaya-jñāna* as *brahma*, some call Him Paramātmā, and some call Him Bhagavān.

Jñānīs experience that same *para-tattva* as *brahma* through their practice of *jñāna-yoga*. *Yogī*s realise the same reality as Paramātmā, and by *bhakti-yoga*, *bhakta*s see Him as Bhagavān. By *aiśvarya-mayī bhakti* (majestic devotion), *bhakta*s realize and render service unto that *para-tattva* as Vaikuṇṭha-nātha Nārāyaṇa, and by *mādhurya-mayī-prema bhakti*, the process of worship in the moods

of Vraja (vraja-bhāva), they see Him as Svayam Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara. Realization of *brahma*, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān is not the same. There is a gradation. By constitutional nature, water, ice and mist are one (water), although water is not called ice or mist, nor is ice called mist or water. In the same way, Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the pinnacle of *para-tattva*. The first realization of that *para-tattva* is *brahma*, the second realization is Paramātmā, and the third realization is Svayam Bhagavān. These three perceptions are not the same. Therefore, in *śāstra*, *parabrahma* is described as superior to *brahma*. This has been very clearly explained in *Gītā* (14.27): *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*. "I alone am the basis of that *nirviśeṣa-brahma*." The adjective param before *brahma* and before ātmā establishes the superiority of *parabrahma* and Paramātmā over *brahma* and the ātmā respectively. But the adjective param is never used before the word Bhagavān. Therefore, Svayam Bhagavān alone is the topmost limit of *para-tattva*; Paramātmā and *brahma* are just His two manifestations. The bodily effulgence of Kṛṣṇa is called *brahma*, and the portion of His portion is called Paramātmā.

Śrīla *Bhakti*vinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, "The third and topmost *akṣara-puruṣa* is called Bhagavān. I am that very *bhagavat-tattva*. I am transcendental to *kṣara-puruṣa* (the *jīva*), and even superior to the two other *akṣara-puruṣas*: *brahma* and Paramātmā. I am, therefore celebrated as Puruṣottama, both in this world and in the Vedas. This *siddhānta* should be understood: there are two *puruṣas*, *kṣara* and *akṣara*. *Akṣara-puruṣa* has three manifestations. The general manifestation is *brahma*, a higher manifestation is Paramātmā, and the supreme manifestation is Bhagavān."

Chapter 15, *Śloka* 19

yo mām evam asammūḍho
jānāti puruṣottamam
sa sarva-vid bhajati māṁ

sarva-bhāvena bhārata

bhārata—O scion of Bhārata; *saḥ*—he; *yaḥ*—who; (is) *asam-mūḍhaḥ*—undeluded; (and) *jānāti*—knows; *mām*—Me; *evam*—thus; (as) *puruṣa-uttamam*—the Supreme Person; (is) *sarva-vit*—a knower of all (truths); (and) *bhajati*—he worships; *mām*—Me; *sarva-bhāvena*—wholeheartedly.

O Bhārata, one who is not deluded by various opinions knows Me in this way as Puruṣottama. Such a person is the knower of everything, and he, therefore, engages wholeheartedly in *bhajana* to Me.

Sārārtha-Varṣiṇī

If someone disagrees with the meaning that Śrī Bhagavān has established, in response He says, "They argue because they are bewildered by My *māyā*. *Sādhus*, however, are not deluded." To explain the characteristics of such saintly persons, He speaks this *śloka* beginning with the words yo mām. *Asammūḍhaḥ* means those who are not deluded by the opinions of different philosophers. "Although those who know Me as Puruṣottama, the Supreme Person, may not have studied the *śāstras*, they know everything (*sarva-vid*) because they know the actual meaning and *tattva* of all *śāstra*. However, those who study all the *śāstras* and teach it to others, without understanding Me in this way, are deluded and completely foolish. Only those who actually know Me as Puruṣottama engage in My *bhajana* with every part of their being. Others are not really engaged in My *bhajana*, although it seems that they are."

Sārārtha-Varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti

After explaining *Paramātmā-tattva*, the worshipable object of the *yogī*s, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself now explains His Puruṣottama-*tattva* and its glories. He is well-known as Puruṣottama, being transcendental to *kṣara-puruṣa* (the *jīva*), and also superior to the other two *akṣara-puruṣas*; *brahma* and Paramātmā. He is therefore the shelter of both the *jīvātmā* and of Paramātmā. This has been established in different places in the *Gītā*. The supremacy of

the worshipable Deity (*upāsya*) is established by the excellence of the worshipper (*upāsaka*). *Gītā* (6.47) also states: *śraddhāvān bhajate yo māṁ sa me yuktatamo mataḥ*. "Those *bhakti-yogī*s who engage in the *bhajana* of Bhagavān with faith are said to be superior to all types of *yogī*s." Therefore, the supremacy of Bhagavān, the worshipable object of the *bhakta*s, is established over the others. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.28) also it is said: *ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*. "Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead."

Also in *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* it is said that, although from the point of view of *tattva* there is no difference between the *svarūpa* of Śrī Nārāyaṇa and that of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, from the perspective of *rasa*, the *svarūpa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is superior.

siddhāntatas tv abhede 'pi
śrīśa-kṛṣṇa svarūpayoḥ
rasenotkṛṣyate kṛṣṇa-
rūpam eṣā rasa-sthitiḥ

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Eastern Division 2.32

Although in *siddhānta* there is no difference between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Nārāyaṇa, from the point of view of *rasa* the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is superior. This is the glory of *rasa*.

Chapter 15, *Śloka* 20

iti guhyatamaṁ śāstram
idam uktaṁ mayānagha
etad buddhvā buddhimān syāt
kṛta-kṛtyaś ca bhārata

anagha bhārata—O sinless Bhārata; *iti*—thus; idam—this; guhyatamam—most confidential; *śāstra*m—*śāstra*; uktam—has been spoken; *mayā*—by Me; *syāt*—one becomes; *buddhimān*—enlightened; ca—and; *kṛta-kṛtyaḥ*—fulfilled; buddhvā—having understood; etat—this.

O sinless Bhārata, I have hereby revealed the most

confidential secret of *śāstra*. One with pure intelligence becomes fully enlightened and blessed by knowing this.

Sārārtha-Varṣiṇī

Śrī Bhagavān is concluding this chapter with this *śloka* beginning with the word *iti*. Śrī Bhagavān says, "In these twenty *śloka*s, I have fully expounded the most secret doctrine of *śāstra*." This chapter establishes the distinction between spirit and matter, and shows that among the threefold manifestations of the *akṣara puruṣas*, the *svarūpa* of Puruṣottama puruṣa Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Reality.

Thus ends the *Bhāvānuvāda* of the *Sārārtha-Varṣiṇī Ṭīkā*, by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, on the Fifteenth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, which gives pleasure to the *bhakta*s and is accepted by all saintly persons.

Sārārtha-Varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti

In concluding this subject, Śrī Bhagavān has said that *Puruṣottama-yoga* as described in this chapter, is that part of *śāstra* which contains the most confidential knowledge. The import of this statement is that no one except the *bhakta*s can comprehend knowledge of this *tattva*. Since Arjuna is a very dear *bhakta* of Bhagavān, Śrī Bhagavān is revealing knowledge of this most confidential reality only to him. By the mercy of the *bhakta*s, the lives of those who are able to attain knowledge of this confidential *tattva* are blessed.

Śrīla *Bhakti*vinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, "O sinless one, this Puruṣottama-*yoga* is, indeed, the most confidential instruction in *śāstra*. After knowing this, an intelligent *jīva* becomes enlightened and blessed. O Bhārata, all impurities in connection with āśraya (the abode, the *jīva*) and *viṣaya* (the object of *bhakti*) are dispelled upon understanding this *yoga*. *Bhakti* is the blissful activity of the ātmā. To correctly execute the process of *bhakti*, two factors are most necessary: the purity of the *jīva* who is its *āśraya*, and the complete manifestation of Bhagavān, who is its *viṣaya*. As long as

the *jīva* has the conception that *brahma* and Paramātmā are equal to Bhagavān (*bhagavat-tattva*), he cannot attain the process of *viśuddha-bhakti* (the function of his unalloyed existence). The process of *bhakti* is executed in its purest form only when he realizes *Puruṣottama-tattva* as *para-tattva*.

"During the sādhana stage of *bhakti-yoga*, three great anarthas (unwanted things) are to be removed by the power of *sādhu-saṅga* and by surrendering to the limbs of *śuddha-bhajana*. The *jīva*'s first weakness of heart is the desire to enjoy *māyā* by misusing the freedom which was bestowed upon him in his pure stage by Bhagavān. Later on, while wandering in the material world, he developed his second weakness of heart, which is the attachment for sense objects. Among these weaknesses of the heart, *hṛdaya-daurbalya*, attachment to the material world is the third *anartha*. All the other anarthas are generated from these three weaknesses of heart."

The first five *śloka*s explain that pure renunciation is the symptom that destroys the above weaknesses. Deliberation on *Puruṣottama-tattva* along with *yukta-vairāgya* generated from *bhakti* is given from the sixth *śloka* to the end of this chapter. This chapter describes the difference between inert matter and spirit, and the deliberation on different manifestations of conscious reality.

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-Varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*, by Śrī Śrīmad *Bhaktivedānta* Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, on the Fifteenth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

Śrīmad-*Bhagavad-gītā* Chapter 18

Śloka 63

iti te jñānam ākhyātaṁ
guhyād guhyataraṁ mayā
vimṛśyaitad aśeṣeṇa
yathecchasi tathā kuru

iti—thus; ākhyātam—has been described; mayā—by Me; te

—to you; *jñāna*m—knowledge; guhyataram—more confidential; guhyāt—than the confidential knowledge; vimṛśya—after reflecting; etat—on this; aśeṣeṇa—completely; yathā—as; icchasi—you wish; tathā—so; kuru—do.

Thus, I have instructed you in knowledge which is more confidential than the secret knowledge of *brahma*. Reflect on this knowledge properly, and then act as you wish.

Sārārtha-Varṣiṇī

Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this *śloka* beginning with the word iti to conclude the entire *Gītā*. "One can know *karma-yoga*, *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga* by this knowledge. That is, it is even more confidential than the secret knowledge of *jñāna-śāstra*. This being the topmost secret, even sages such as Vasiṣṭha, Veda-vyāsa and Nārada have not revealed it in *śāstras* composed by them. In other words, their omniscience is relative and My omniscience is complete. They do not know this *tattva* fully, because it is highly confidential. Since it is highly secret, I do not even instruct it to these exalted sages. After reflecting deeply on My instructions regarding this knowledge, act as you desire, according to your discretion."

In this way, the last set of six chapters have been completed. This *Gītā-śāstra*, consisting of eighteen chapters, is the crest-jewel of all vidyās (education). It is comprised of three sets of six chapters and is like a treasure chest that contains the most precious and unrivaled gem, namely that of highly confidential *bhakti*. The first set of six chapters, called *karma-ṣaṭkas*, is like the gold-covered lower foundation of this chest. The last set of six chapters, *jñāna-ṣaṭka*, is like the gem-studded cover of the chest. *Bhakti*, the set of six chapters situated in between these two *ṣaṭkas*, is the most precious wealth within the three worlds. *Bhakti*, which has the power to control and overpower Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is situated within this chest like an excellent, great and beautiful gem. The forthcoming two *śloka*s, the first beginning with the words *man-manā bhava* (18.65-66),

which consists of sixty-four syllables, should be considered as the pure maidservant of this *bhakti*, being situated in the upper covering of the chest.

Sārārtha-Varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti

In this present *śloka*, Śrī Bhagavān is presenting His conclusion to *Bhagavad-gītā*. He says that the *brahma-jñāna* He previously described is confidential; paramātma-*jñāna* is more confidential and *bhagavat-jñāna* is the most confidential. He will clearly explain this in the following *śloka*. Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is alone *advaya-jñāna-svarūpa* and the highest limit of *para-tattva*. He has three manifestations: *brahma*, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. As *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.11) states:

vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ
yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmeti
bhagavān iti śabdyate

Those who are *tattva-vit* realize that non-dual Absolute Truth in three aspects. *Brahma* only has the characteristic of *cit* or consciousness and is the first realization (manifestation) of that *tattva*. Paramātmā, the extension of that *cit* consciousness, is the second manifestation, and Bhagavān, who manifests as *cid-vilāsa-rūpa* (He who performs transcendental amorous pastimes), is the third realisation of that *tattva*. That *tattva* is known by three names in these three states.

These three manifestations of Vrajendra-nandana Kṛṣṇa are *brahma*, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. Of these, realization of *brahma* (the effulgence emanating from His body) is the perverted reflection of the *cid-aṁśa*, the conscious part of the *para-tattva*. This is called incomplete realization. Paramātmā realization is a partial realization of *sat* and *cit*, and Bhagavān realization is the complete realization of the Absolute in the form of *sat, cit* and *ānanda*. Here *brahma-jñāna* is called confidential (*guhya*), *paramātma-jñāna* more confidential (*guhyatara*) and *bhagavat-jñāna* the most confidential (*guhyatama*).

This most confidential *bhagavat-jñāna* also has three divisions: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is complete in Dvārakā, more complete in Mathurā and most complete in Vṛndāvana or Gokula. Arjuna, who is a friend of Kṛṣṇa in His pastimes in Dvārakā, only knows His complete feature.

There are eighteen chapters in the *Gītā* and they are divided into three divisions of six chapters. The first six chapters describe *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* which is offered to Bhagavān. The second six chapters describe *bhakti-yoga* and the third six chapters describe *jñāna-yoga*. One should not think that *jñāna-yoga* is the highest and final conclusion just because it comes at the end. Rather, the hidden meaning is that *bhakti-yoga*, which is situated in between *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*, gives strength to them both, thus making *karma* and *jñāna* qualified to give their results. *Karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga* are useless without the shelter of *bhakti*. In this way, the *Gītā* is like a box, its base is *karma-yoga,* its upper lid is *jñāna-yoga* and the great wealth of Bhakti-devī is situated like a precious gem within. In this way, people in general can understand that the first six chapters are confidential, the last six chapters are more confidential and the middle six chapters are the most confidential.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, "*Brahma-jñāna*, which was explained to you earlier, is a secret. *Paramātma-jñāna*, which is explained now, is more secret. Reflect on this thoroughly and do as you wish. This means that if you want to achieve *brahma* by taking shelter of *jñāna* through *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* and gradually achieve My *nirguṇa-bhakti*, then perform your actions in this battle as *niṣkāma-karma*. And if you want to surrender to Paramātmā, then engage in battle while offering your actions to Īśvara, performing the occupation which is born of your *kṣatriya* nature, as prompted by Him. Then Īśvara, who is My *avatāra*, will gradually bestow *nirguṇa-bhakti* upon you. Whatever your conclusion, understand that to fight is certainly beneficial for you."

Lecture

Yes it Applies to Us

Tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti-vedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja
May 19, 2004: Badger, California (Part 1)

[The following class is very technical, especially the discussion on the verse about the non-dual Absolute. Yet, though it may seem at first glance that such a scholarly presentation of this verse has nothing to do with us common folk, understanding this verse and the others under discussion is essential to the success of our normal everyday lives. They teach us how to view the world around us in all circumstances of life, in order to become happy:]

The 88,000 *ṛṣis* (saints) and *maharṣis* (saintly kings) at Naimiṣāraṇya asked Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī to explain the essence of all activities, by performing which ones soul can be happy. He replied:

sa vai puṁsāṁ paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihatā
yayātmā suprasīdati

["The supreme occupation (*dharma*) for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self." (*Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* 1.2.6)]

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu also inspired this verse in the heart of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda, and then Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī composed a verse that was still sweeter and more complete:

anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam

ānukūlyena krsnanu-
śīlanaṁ bhaktir uttama

["*Uttama-bhakti* is the cultivation of activities that are meant exclusively for the benefit of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in other words, the uninterrupted flow of service to Him, performed through all endeavors of the body, mind, and speech, and through the expression of various spiritual sentiments (*bhāvas*). It is not covered by *jñāna* (knowledge aimed at impersonal liberation) and *karma* (reward-seeking activity), *yoga* or austerities; and it is completely free from all desires other than the aspiration to bring happiness to Kṛṣṇa." (*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11)]

We elaborately explained this yesterday, and we have also quoted the following verse, which is presented in *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* just after "*sa vai puṁsāṁ paro dharmo*…"

vāsudeve bhagavati
bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ
janayaty āśu vairāgyam
jñānam ca yad ahaitukam

["By rendering devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one immediately acquires causeless knowledge and detachment from the world." (*Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* 1.2.7)]

If *bhakti* is performed to the lotus feet of Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara, causeless knowledge and detachment follow. Ahaitu means causeless. *Bhakti* comes, then *vairāgya* (renunciation or detachment), and then *tattva-jñāna* (knowledge and realization of all established philosophical truths) manifests in the heart. They are sure to come. If *tattva-jñāna* and detachment from worldly sense gratification are not coming, you should think, "This is surely due to my offenses." Otherwise, Kṛṣṇa's holy name is so sweet and so powerful that detachment and *tattva-jñāna* surely come to anyone

who is sincerely chanting. How will it come? Kṛṣṇa will send it through *mahat-sanga – sādhu-saṅga – guru-saṅga.*

The next verse in *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* is:

dharmaḥ svanuṣṭhitaḥ puṁsāṁ
viṣvaksena-kathāsu yaḥ
notpādayed yadi ratiṁ
śrama eva hi kevalam

["The occupational activities a man performs according to his own position are only so much useless labor if they do not provoke attraction for the message of the Personality of Godhead." (*Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* 1.2.8)]

This is very important.

śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ
smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam
arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāsyaṁ
sakhyam ātma-nivedanam

["Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one's best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words)" (*Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* 7.5.23)]

If you are performing all the nine limbs of *bhakti* – engaging in *arcana* by worshiping 1008 *Śālagrāma śilās* and doing so many other devotional activities, but you have no taste in *hari-kathā* – all this will be rendered useless and a waste of time.

If you are worshiping thousands of *śāla-grāmas*, *Govardhana-śilās* and other *śilās*, Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, and you are doing book distribution and all other devotional activities – but you have no taste in *hari-kathā* – this is compared to a tree without a trunk. That tree has been cut down, and still you are giving it water. There is no use in that.

Moreover, if you are hearing *hari-kathā* but are not following the principles of *bhakti*, and yet you are thinking, "I will hear, but I will not follow," – this is still more bogus. *"Notpādayed yadi ratiṁ śrama eva hi kevalam."*

vadanti tat tattva-vidas
tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmeti
bhagavān iti śabdyate

["Learned transcendentalists who know the Absolute Truth call this nondual substance Brahman, Paramātmā or Bhagavān." (SB 1.2.11)]

The first three verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are the *maṅgalācaraṇam*, (auspicious invocation), and also its glorification. But this verse is the very basis of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and in fact, the entire *Bhāgavatam* is an explanation of this verse. Śrīla *Bhaktisiddhānta* Sarasvatī Gosvāmī has also said this. He has explained the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* on the basis of this verse, and our Guru Mahārāja, *Parama-pūjyapāda* Śrīla *Bhakti*-pra*jñāna* Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, also used to do this.

What is *advaya-tattva*? What is the meaning of the word '*advayam*'? Bhakti-sāra Mahārāja.

[Bhakti-sāra Mahārāja:] Actually, this verse halted even Śrī Gaṇeśa, when he was trying to write down *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by taking dictation from Śrīla Vyāsadeva. He couldn't understand it. His pen stopped as he began pondering the verse. In the meantime Vyāsadeva wrote the rest of *Bhāgavatam* in his mind, as well as all the other *śāstras*, and he was still stuck there.*[See end-note]

This verse seems to be a paradoxical enigma. How can something with no duality have three features? It seems like a contradiction. If something has no difference, how is it that there are three differences in it? This is very difficult to understand.

There are three kinds of apparent differences, which are not really differences, and they are reconciled by our *ācāryas*. One is that there is no difference between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His own body and His self.

aṅgāni yasya sakalendriya-vṛtti-manti
paśyanti pānti kalayanti ciraṁ jaganti
ānanda-cinmaya-sad-ujjvala-vigrahasya
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

["I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, whose transcendental form is full of bliss, truth, substantiality and is thus full of the most dazzling splendor. Each of the limbs of that transcendental figure possesses in Himself, the full-fledged functions of all the organs, and eternally sees, maintains and manifests the infinite universes, both spiritual and mundane." (*Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.32)]

In the conditioned state of the living entity, there is a difference between ones body, his self, and between one part of his body and another part. For instance, our hands can't see and our feet can't smell. But in the spiritual body of Lord Kṛṣṇa there is no such duality. There is no duality, no difference, between one part of His

body and any other part. This is one type of difference and non-difference in Kṛṣṇa.

Another is that Kṛṣṇa has various expansions, such as Lord Nārāyaṇa and Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. Although it appears that there is a difference between them, there is not. The *Brahma-saṁhitā* describes this in the following verse:

dīpārcir eva hi daśāntaram abhyupetya
dīpāyate vivṛta-hetu-samāna-dharmā
yas tādṛg eva hi ca viṣṇutayā vibhāti
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

[“The light of one candle being communicated to other candles, although it burns separately in them, is the same in its quality. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda who exhibits Himself equally in the same mobile manner in His various manifestations.” (*Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.46)]

The power of the flame is transmitted from the original candle into other candles, which will then have the same brilliance or potency. There is no difference between the light and all those candles, even though they are originally lit from one candle. We can say there are many candles, but actually the light in them is the same. Similarly, although there are many features of Lord Kṛṣṇa – many aspects – they are all actually one personality who is just displaying different features. Last year Śrīla Gurudeva gave the example of the quarter moon, half moon and full moon. All are the same moon, seen from different angles of vision at different times, and displaying different degrees of fullness.

Finally, there seems to be a difference between the Supreme Absolute Truth and His energies, which are not in the same category as Himself and not Himself – like *prakṛti* (the material nature) and the *jīva* (living entity). The material nature and the individual living

entity appear to be different from the Supreme Lord.

When we perspire from the pores of our body, the perspiration comes out and it becomes different from our body. We don't have any more relation with it. But regarding Mahā-viṣṇu, He emanates millions of universes, and He impregnates the material nature with unlimited *jīvas*. Yet, at all times, He has complete and absolute control of that which has come from Him. If you could perspire and then recall the perspiration back into yourself, it may be said that you would have "absolute" control over that product of yourself. In other words, it would be really non-different from you, because at all times you maintain control. In this way, Śrīla *Jīva* Gosvāmī has described that even though there appears to be a difference between Kṛṣṇa and His energies, such as *prakṛti* and *jīva*, actually there is no duality. He is always the master and in complete control of His energies.

[Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja:] Sundara Gopāla.

[Sundara Gopāla dāsa:] This verse mentions the words *advaya-jñāna-para-tattva*. *Tattva* means truth and *para* means supreme or absolute. So *para-tattva* means Supreme Truth or Absolute Truth. *Advaya* means non-dual. In other words, this truth is not two or three or many – but one. There is nothing that has any existence separate or independent of that truth.

[Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja:] This is important. Again.

[Sundara Gopāla dāsa:] *Advaya-jñāna para-tattva* means that there is no object or entity, anywhere, that has any existence separate or independent of that Truth. Someone may put forward one or more of three objections. The first is "*svagata-bheda*", the objection that, "In the transcendental form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa there is some duality." In other words, Kṛṣṇa has features, He has qualities and He has bodily limbs. A person may object that, "Any one of Kṛṣṇa's bodily limbs is

different from any other one", but this is in fact not the case. *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* states that unlike our material bodies, which are entirely limited, being made of gross matter, the transcendental limbs of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are interchangeable. In other words, with His eyes, Śrī Kṛṣṇa can accept the food-offering of His devotees. With any one of his senses, He can perform the function of any other sense.

Śrīla Gurudeva has explained the analogy of a small cow or calf made of sugar. This calf or cow has features, but every part of it is made of condensed sugar. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *raso vai saḥ* (fully consisting of transcendental mellows). From this *sūtra*, '*raso vai saḥ'*, we can see that there is no duality in Śrī Kṛṣṇa – in any of His qualities or limbs, or in any of the variety that He shows in his transcendental features.

The next objection is "*sajātīya-bheda*". This is the objection that, "Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His various *avatāra*s are different from each other." There seems to be duality. There is Śrī Nṛsiṁhadeva, Śrī Varāhadeva and so many other incarnations. Someone may say, "These are different. There is duality here." Actually, however, as Śrīpāda Bhakti-sāra Mahārāja has explained, giving the analogy of a moon: The moon at different phases may appear to be different. Its shape will appear to be different. At a certain time, when the moon is new, it is very thin and small. It will eventually grow to a full moon, and then wane again. In the same way, the various *avatāras* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa display certain qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but Svayaṁ-Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa (the original form of Kṛṣṇa as the son of Nanda Mahārāja in Vṛndāvana) displays all qualities to their maximum.

The next objection, "*vijātīya-bheda*", is the objection that, "There are so many things in existence, in this world and out of this world, and they are in categories that are different from each other." The *jīva*, for instance, seems to be different from matter. Many different categories of existence appear to be different from each

other. Someone may say, "Here there is duality." But Śrīla *Jīva* Gosvāmī explains in his *Śrī Tattva-sandarbha* that if two things have the same origin and they don't conflict with each other, it may then be said that they are one. In this world it does appear that things conflict with each other; but this is actually illusion, and that illusion comes from the tendency to want to enjoy matter. Actually, everything is fully under the direction of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Nothing conflicts with anything. If there is any conflict, it is merely a conflict with our own desire to enjoy this world. So, these three objections have no standing, and the absolute non-duality, the non-duality of the Absolute Truth, is thereby established.

[Mādhava Mahārāja:] Śrīla Gurudeva has said that this verse is the basis of the entire *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

vadanti tat tattva-vidas
tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmeti
bhagavān iti śabdyate

["Learned transcendentalists who know the Absolute Truth call this nondual substance Brahman, Paramātmā or Bhagavān." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.11)]

As you have heard from Śrīpāda Sundara Gopāla prabhu, "*advaya*" means non-dual, and "*para-tattva*" means Supreme Truth. He is "without second," but that does not mean that He is alone. Rather it means that no one is equal to Him, what to speak of being greater than Him. He is *asamātiśaya, asamordhva,* and *anurdha-samāna*. These words three words have the same meaning – no one is equal to Him and no one is greater than Him – and they are mentioned in relation to *advaya-jñāna para-tattva*.

Śrīmān Mahāprabhu told Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī:

kṛṣṇera svarūpa-vicāra śuna, sanātana
advaya-jñāna-tattva, vraje vrajendra-nandana

["O Sanātana, please hear about the eternal form of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He is the Absolute Truth, devoid of duality but present in Vṛndāvana as the son of Nanda Mahārāja. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 20.153)]

This consideration is called *tattva-gata vicāra*. *Vicāra* means consideration. The other consideration is called *rasa-gata vicāra*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu heard from Rāya Räm*ānanda*:

`kṛṣṇera svarūpa' kaha `rādhāra svarūpa'
`rasa' kon tattva, `prema'--kon tattva-rūpa

[“Kindly explain the transcendental features of Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Also explain the truth of transcendental mellows and the transcendental form of love of Godhead.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 8.119)]

When Rāya Rām*ānanda* replied, he was speaking with regard to *rasa-gata vicāra*, and Śrīmān Mahāprabhu replied to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī on *tattva-gata vicāra*. In this verse of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, "*Vadanti tat tattva vidas*…" the consideration of *tattva*-gata is being discussed, although *rasa* is also there.

So there are three features: *Brahma* (Brahman), Paramātmā and Bhagavān. When Bhagavān is situated in all His power – but hiding this and only allowing something to manifest from His *cit*, potency, that is called *Brahma*. *Brahma* is the most distant reflection of *cit-śakti* (the transcendental knowledge potency). Lord Kṛṣṇa's effulgence is *Brahma*. No pastime is there; nothing is clear.

Śrīla Gurudeva gave the following example in Mathurā when he was discussing this *śloka*: Once, when Vasudeva Mahārāja was

performing a *yajña*, and Śrī Nārada Ṛṣi was descending there from a Vaikuṇṭha planet. At first, everybody present thought that a light was coming. They could not understand that it was Nārada. After that, when Nārada Ṛṣi came a little closer, everyone could understand further, that he was some kind of human being. Still, the situation was not clear. When he finally came down, everybody understood that he was Nārada Ṛṣi. The first vision was not clear. It was only light: Similarly Brahmā is only the most distant reflection of cit, and Paramātmā is the combination of sat and cit. He has no pastimes like Bhagavān. Bhagavān is complete – *sat-cit-ānanda* (the embodiment of eternity, bliss and knowledge).

This Bhagavān is *svagata-bheda-rahita*, as Sundara Gopāla explained. We have many limbs on our body. Kṛṣṇa also has various limbs, but in His body there is no difference between one limb and another. In this connection Śrīla Gurudeva has given an example. Once the king of Jagannātha Purī invaded Vidyānagara in South India, and he brought the Deities of Rādhā-kānta, Sākṣi-gopāla and Bhaṇḍa Gaṇeśa back to Purī.

At first, the king kept Sākṣi-gopāla in the Jagannātha temple. One day Jagannātha-deva came in a dream and said, "O King, from where have you brought this Ṭhākura? Since He arrived, He has been eating everything, and I have been fasting completely – as if it was Nirjalā Ekādaśī. Please take him out, to another place." Gopāla is a little boy, so Sākṣi-gopāla can crawl very quickly on His knees, hands and elbows. Whenever an offering of foodstuffs comes to the door of the altar room, even before it is placed on the altar, He runs there and eats everything." So Śrī Bhagavān can eat by His eyes, He can walk by His eyes, and He can do anything by any limb of his body. Lord Brahmājī has said in *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā*:

aṅgāni yasya sakalendriya-vṛtti-manti
paśyanti pānti kalayanti ciraṁ jaganti
ānanda-cinmaya-sad-ujjvala-vigrahasya

govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

["I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, whose transcendental form is full of bliss, truth, substantiality and is thus full of the most dazzling splendor. Each of the limbs of that transcendental figure possesses in Himself, the full-fledged functions of all the organs, and eternally sees, maintains and manifests the infinite universes, both spiritual and mundane." (*Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.32)]

By any limb of His body, He can do the job of any other limb. Any limb can do anything. *Svagata-bheda-rahita*. There is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and His body, and there is no difference between one part of His body and another.

Sajātīya means the same type. God has many incarnations. Though externally they seem different, with different features, they are not. By *tattva-gata vicāra,* the considerations of established philosophical truths, all the incarnations are *kṛṣṇa-tattva*. We offer tulasī leaves and flowers to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. In the same way, we can offer tulasī to the feet of Viṣṇu-*tattva*. They are *sajātīya-bheda-rahita* – of the same type. There is no difference.

Vijātīya-bheda-rahita. There is *cit-jagat* (the spiritual world) and *jaḍa-jagat* (the material world). They both depend on Kṛṣṇa, so they have no independence or different existence. Thus, Bhagavān is *svagata-bheda-rahita*, *sajātīya-bheda-rahita* and *vijātīya-bheda-rahita.*

[Śyāmarāṇī dāsī:] At the beginning of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in the West, when we were all very brand new devotees, in order to help us understand this, our Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us some very simple analogies. One analogy is that of a mountain. When you see a mountain from very far away, it looks like a cloud. When you get closer you see it is something

green, and when you get very close you see all the grasses, plants, insects, and so much other variety–but the mountain is one. Another analogy is of a train coming into the station. From afar it looks like a light, when it comes closer it looks like a lump of iron, and when you go inside you see seats, posters, poles, newspapers on the floor, people sitting, etc. The third analogy is of the sun. When the sun is seen from very far away, it seems like a glow, a light. When you look more closely, you see the sun-disc, which is over everyone's head, whether a person is in India or America or anywhere else. If you get very close and go on the sun planet itself, you can see the great varieties on the sun and even talk to the sun-god. So, these are three very simple analogies.

[Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja:] We have discussed and explained this verse in various ways, and it can be understood very simply. *Tattva-vidas* means those who know *tattva*: *kṛṣṇa-tattva, jīva-tattva, māyā-tattva, bhakti-tattva, rasa-tattva, rādhā-tattva* and all other kinds of *tattva*. In this connection, "*vidas*" means "to know factually". "To know" means that they have actually realized these *tattva*s. Such *tattva-vidas* are not like you, who are only speaking. *Advayam* means the Supreme Truth, and I will explain this in very easy language so that you can understand it.

There are not many Gods. The Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, Jews and others do not worship different Supreme Gods. There is only one God. Due to the various pronunciations and languages of different places, it may thus appear that there are many Gods or Truths. But there is really only one highest established Truth.

The devotees here have explained this fact very well, and I will now explain it in a very easy way.

We do not see the Supreme Lord here. Where is He? An unrealized person sees so many other persons, so many countries, so

many trees, so many mountains, so many snakes, aquatics and entities who live in the air. We see only one sun, but really there are billions of suns in the billions of universes. The existence of these entities, objects and universes is not separate from the Highest Truth, Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara. They are not independent. Even Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva and Lord Nārāyaṇa are not independent. They all depend on Lord Kṛṣṇa. What we are seeing and experiencing is not directly Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but at the same time it is not other than Him.

All have come from Lord Kṛṣṇa's power. *Śakti-śaktimatayor-abheda* – Kṛṣṇa and His power are non-different. Kṛṣṇa is *śaktimān*, (the possessor of all power) and Śrīmatī Rādhikā is His *śakti*, power. The supreme power is Śrīmatī Rādhikā, whose *śaktimān* is Kṛṣṇa, and there is no difference between Them. When Kṛṣṇa wishes or desires anything, at once, in a moment, His power will fulfill His desire. He easily creates millions upon millions of universes, and many millions upon millions of *jīvas* in 8,400,000 kinds of species of life – but none of them have any independent existence. Even *śakti* has no separate or independent existence. There is only one Truth, and that is Lord Kṛṣṇa; so He is *advaya-jñāna para-tattva*.

If you go to the Himalaya Mountains or the Alps, from very far away you will see them like a cloud or fog. If you go closer, you will see trees, mountains, water and so many other things. Then, when you finally reach the spot, everything can be seen. Similarly, as you will gradually begin to know all this *tattva*, you will first see Brahman, with no form and no qualities. Brahman is also Kṛṣṇa, because there is no existence other than Him. So, first you will see Him like Brahman, second like Paramātmā and third like Bhagavān. *Brahmeti paramātmeti bhagavān iti śabdyate.* Here, Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī has used the word "*bhagavad-tattva*," and next time, in a later verse, he tells us who that *bhagavad-tattva* is.

ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ
kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam

["All of the above-mentioned incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord, but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead." (*Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* 1.3.28)] ṅ

There may be so many Bhagavāns, Gods. Rāma is Bhagavān, Nārāyaṇa is Bhagavān, Mathureśa Kṛṣṇa, Dvārakādhīśa Kṛṣṇa and Goloka Kṛṣṇa are all Bhagavān. But Svayam (the original and complete) Bhagavān is Vrajendra-nandana Kṛṣṇa, that Kṛṣṇa whose abode is Vṛndāvana. I have explained these truths in very clear language, so that it is easy for you to understand.

[End-note: Mādhava Mahārāja: When Śrīla Vyāsadeva wanted to reveal the scriptures, he needed a writer. He told Lord Brahmā, "I can dictate, but I have no time to write; so I want a writer." Lord Brahmā said that Śrī Gaṇeśa would be the perfect person. Gaṇeśa thought, "I am more intelligent and more qualified then anyone. This is insulting for me, being a writer of this person." Still, he said, "Yes, I can write." He could not deny Lord Brahmā, because Lord Brahmā is his superior.

"But I have one condition." He added. "When I start, I should not stop my writing. If I stop once, then I will not write anymore." Śrīla Vyāsadeva said, "I also have one condition. When I dictate to you, you have to understand everything properly. If you write without understanding, your head will crack and I will not be responsible for that." Then Śrī Gaṇeśa thought: "O my God, once I lose my head, my father will again put an elephant head on me.

When Vyāsa was dictating, sometimes he spoke verses that were very hard to understand properly. If Gaṇeśa would write without understanding, his head would explode; so when he is thinking, "What is the meaning?" in the meantime, Śrīla Vyāsadeva composed thousands of *ślokas* in his mind. When Gaṇeśa then wrote down the verse after somewhat understanding it, then Vyāsadeva continued dictating.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's Tattva-sandarbha

TEXT 51

atha kiṁ-svarūpaṁ tad vastu-tattvam ity atrāha:

vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam iti.
ānaṁ cid-eka-rūpam. advayatvaṁ cāsya svayaṁ-siddha-
tādṛśātādṛśa-tattvāntarābhāvāt sva-śakty-eka-sahāyatvāt
paramāśrayaṁ taṁ vinā tāsām asiddhatvāc ca. tattvam iti parama-
puruṣārthatā-dyotanayā parama-sukha-rūpatvaṁ tasya bodhyate.
ata eva tasya nityatvaṁ ca darśitam. śrī-sūtaḥ.

"What is the nature of this absolute reality?"
Sūta Gosvāmī answers [*Bhāg.* 1.2.11]:
"The knowers of that absolute reality call it nondual consciousness."

Here the word *jñāna* refers to that entity whose nature is exclusively pure consciousness. This pure spirit is called nondual for the following reasons: (1) there is nothing else, either similar or dissimilar, that is self-existent; (2) it takes support only from its own potencies; and (3) these potencies can have no existence without it as their absolute foundation.

The term *tattva* here implies the idea of the supreme goal of human life. Thus we understand that this *tattva,* or absolute reality, is the embodiment of the highest bliss and is therefore also eternal.
The verse under discussion was spoken by Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī.

COMMENTARY
Absolute Reality Is Nondual Consciousness

In the last Text Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī stated that the absolute reality is to be known from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This naturally

raises the question, "What is the essential nature of this absolute reality?" In reply Jīva Gosvāmī quotes *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's* statement that the absolute reality is nondual (*advayam*), or in other words one without a second. There cannot be more than one absolute reality, because if a second one were to be found the first one would immediately cease to be absolute. That the absolute reality is nondual, however, does not mean that nothing else exists. Rather, the word "nondual" indicates two further things (in addition to the meaning stated above): first, the absolute reality is self-existent, meaning that it is grounded in itself and depends on no external support; second, nothing else can exist independent of this nondual reality's support.

In Vedic philosophy, an object is considered nondual if it is free of three kinds of differences—those between objects of the same class, those between objects of different classes, and those between an object and its parts. A difference between objects of the same class is called *sajātīya-bheda*. Even though two chairs may look the same, function the same, and belong to the same class, called "chair," they still differ as individual chairs. A change in one will not directly affect the other. A difference between objects of different classes is called *vijātīya-bheda*. For example, in its appearance and function a chair is different from a table. Finally, a difference between an object and its parts is called *sva-gata-bheda*. For example, if all the parts of a chair are scattered, the chair will no longer exist. In this way the chair is not self-existent.

These three kinds of differences give rise to the duality we observe throughout material nature. They do not exist, however, on the absolute plane; thus Sūta Gosvāmī calls the pure consciousness (absolute reality) *jñānam advayam,* nondual consciousness.

Even when the Supreme Personality of Godhead expands into forms such as Rāmacandra and Balarāma, these *svāṁśa* (selfsame) expansions remain nondifferent from the Lord's original

self. Still, while He is not dependent on Them, They are dependent on Him. Since the Lord and His *svāṁśa* expansions belong to the same class, no difference of the *sajātīya-bheda* type is found in Him.

Material nature, being inert, belongs to a class of existence different from that of the transcendental Personality of Godhead. This might lead one to conclude that there is *vijātīya-bheda* between Him and material nature. Nevertheless, since material nature's existence is not independent or separate from Him, there is ultimately no difference of *vijātīya-bheda* between Him and His material expansions.

Finally, the Lord's body and its limbs are each fully conscious and potent and therefore nondifferent from Him Himself. For this reason it is said that in Lord Kṛṣṇa there exists no difference of the *svagata-bheda* type.

The finite living entities belong to the marginal potency of the Supreme Lord. Thus one may view them in two ways, both as belonging to the same class as the Lord because they are conscious like Him, and as belonging to a different class because their size and potency is very small. From both viewpoints the *jīvas* are fully dependent on the Supreme Lord, so that there exist none of the three types of differences between them and the Lord. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī concludes, therefore, that although the Lord's energies render Him service in various ways, they have no existence separate from Him (*taṁ vinā tasām asiddhatvāt*).

Just as a spider weaves a web with a special substance it produces and then makes the web its home, so Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the personified nondual absolute reality, employs His own energies to manifest the spiritual realm, where He resides. These energies are part of His internal nature and have no independent existence.

In the verse under discussion (*Bhāg.* 1.2.11), the word

jñānam means "consciousness." Its significance here is that the nondual reality is consciousness and also conscious, just as the sun is light and also luminous. Because the word *jñānam* refers to the absolute reality, this nondual consciousness must have perpetual existence (*sat*) as a characteristic. And because the word *tattvam* indicates the supreme objective of life, it follows that this nondual reality must also be characterized by bliss (*ānanda*), since all living beings seek pleasure, whether they know it or not. Indeed, direct perception, logical analysis, and scriptural authority all confirm that the pursuit of happiness is the ultimate motivation in all activities. This is the basic purpose underlying creative and destructive processes and all personal relationships. As the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.4.5) states, *na vā are patyuḥ kāmāya patiḥ priyo bhavaty ātmanas tu kāmāya patiḥ priyo bhavati:* "My dear, the husband is loved not for his own sake but for the sake of the self."

Here the word "self" refers to either the *jīva* or the Supreme Lord. In our conditioned state, the self we perceive is the *jīva*. We become attached to someone or something because we derive happiness from loving that person or thing. This feeling of happiness comes from our sense of possession—the notion that the object of love is "ours"—not from the person or the object itself. The truth of this principle is shown by the common experience that our happiness naturally decreases when our sense of possession diminishes.

By contrast, in the liberated state we realize that our ultimate Self is the Supreme Lord. When we act solely on the basis of this understanding we become the Lord's pure devotees, and then we render service only for His pleasure and desire nothing in return. Even if the all-attractive Lord treats us roughly we are still happy, for we have abandoned all fears and cares in our loving relationship with Him. Lord Caitanya demonstrated this standard in His *Śikṣāṣṭaka,* where He prayed:

āśliṣya vā pāda-ratāṁ pinaṣṭu mām

adarśanān marma-hatāṁ karotu vā
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampaṭo
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparaḥ

"I know no one but Kṛṣṇa as my Lord, and He shall remain so even if He handles me roughly in His embrace or makes me broken-hearted by not being present before me. He is completely free to do anything and everything, for He is always my worshipful Lord, unconditionally."

In conditioned life we do not know that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme object of love and the source of all bliss. Rather, we mistake ourselves for the source of bliss. To enlighten us about Himself, Kṛṣṇa instructs us in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.8—9):

ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvṁ pravartate
iti matvā bhajante māṁ budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ

mac-cittā mad-gata-prāṇā bodhayantaḥ parasparam
kathayantaś ca māṁ nityaṁ tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca

"I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who perfectly know this engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts. The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss from always enlightening one another and conversing about Me."

Thus there is an inherent relationship between *jñāna* (knowledge), *sat* (eternal existence), and *ānanda (*bliss*)*. This relationship is clearly indicated in such *Śruti* statements as *vijñānam ānandṁ brahma:* "Brahman is pure consciousness and bliss" (*Bṛhad-āraṇaya Up.* 3.9.34). Thus the nature of the nondual consciousness described in this verse has been designated *sac-cid-*

ānanda, "permanent existence, knowledge, and bliss."

In this Text Jīva Gosvāmī presented his thesis, that *jñāna* is eternal. In the next Text he will explain the *pūrva-pakṣa,* that *jñāna* is momentary.